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NORTH-WESTERN NORTH AMERICA: ITS RESOURCES AND ITS INHABITANTS.

BY J. T. ROTHROCK, S. B., M. D.

READ DECEMBER 17TH, 1872.

Of all the strange events of this century, nothing is half so wonderful as the growth and increase in material prosperity of the United States. It seems as though the latent unrest of all the races, which now blend in one composite race, had suddenly become awakened, and with a new energy undertaken to redeem, by a mighty effort, this entire continent from barbarism. In the true spirit of prophecy, a poet long since told us—

“Westward the course of empire takes its way.”

It was but history to assert

“The four first acts already past.”

To-day Berkeley's prophecy is as true as was his history in the year 1700. The years elapsing since (with almost divine forecast) the prediction was made have delivered themselves of their great burden, and the world now may well stand amazed in contemplation of such a prophecy.

To leave the remoter past and come down almost to our own day, who has not read the story of Astoria? We may dwell over the recitals of sufferings, so vividly portrayed there, as over the pages of *Ivanhoe*, half convinced that though there might be much of truth, there was more of romance in the volume. Yet those of us who

know something from personal experience of frontier life can tell you that Irving did not overdraw the picture ; that even within half a century the perils from Indians, from starvation, from the storms and streams, encountered by those whose hardihood led them to cross this continent, were all terribly real. But how changed to-day ! The same great expanse of prairie still sinks in the dim distance below the horizon, and the same lofty peaks still mark the limits at which all westward rovers might well be content to stop ; but the weary miles are transformed into pleasure-journeys, and the most secluded and inaccessible mountain-retreats are opened to every sight-seer whose curiosity leads him thither. While we are shaking the dust of the eastern coast from our clothing, we are carried to the golden gate of California, and can watch the sun disappearing in the Pacific Ocean.

This, then, ladies and gentlemen, must be my apology for asking your attention during the hour in which I shall try to tell you something of that portion of our continent to which public attention is being so largely drawn.

In 1592, San Juan de Fuca, following our western coast, entered the broad strait that now bears his name. At its eastern end a magnificent bay stretches off far to the south. Its shores are covered with timber of fabulous size and in immense quantity. On either side (east and west) rise mountain-ranges on which, in cooler spots, the snow lingers all the year. Rivers, draining fertile valleys, come down through the mountain-gorges to empty into this bay. Here and there islands dot its quiet surface, and between them are deep, safe ship-channels which would float the navies of the world. The whole bay is one splendid harbor. It is now before the public as *Puget Sound*.

Being well known, let that be our starting-point. Going north along the valley of the Frazer, after leaving the flat grounds which have been reclaimed from the ocean by the sediment deposited by the river at its mouth, we enter

the mountains ; spurs at first of the Cascade range, then the gorges in the main chain, through which the river has worn out a channel for itself. On either side high cliffs tower overhead, and shut off the sun, except when at high meridian. Add to this the deep monotonous green of the pine-trees, which predominates over every other color, and the scenery is gloomy enough to impress one sadly. Such an impression, however, can only be momentary, a passing shadow, that soon gives way to a sense of the absolute grandeur of the immense mountain-masses, which tower from 1,000 to 4,000 feet directly above.

The traveller may well wonder at the long-continued power exerted by the rapid current of the Frazer in this gnawing down of the channel to its present level. Imagination falls back in any attempt at grasping the mechanical equivalent which the force would represent, if for geological ages we substitute a day or a year, or any other period our minds can really and truly grasp. Hundreds of feet above the present river-level, we may see the same frettings and groovings that the water is wearing out in the solid rock under our eyes to-day. In the comparative calmness and quiet of its older age the current will drift, on the average, 100 miles a day from its head-waters to the ocean, and in the narrower gorges and rapids it fairly rushes along. We have, on this coast, no river that can at all compare with the Frazer, either in the grandeur of its scenery or the force of its current. With flat, fertile plains, equal in area to the State of New York, draining through numberless tributaries into the main stream, and with immense bodies of snow on the mountains at the heads of these tributaries, to melt away rapidly before an intense spring sun, you can understand why, in the gorges nearer the ocean, the difference between high-water and low-water marks is from forty to ninety feet, when this tremendous volume of water is thrown into the narrower channels. Yet, with all its present velocity of current, there was a time,

I have reason to think, when the Frazer, in common with the Nasse, Skena and Stukine rivers, was larger, and flowed at even a more rapid rate to their destination. Here and there along their valleys, terrace rises after terrace from the water's edge back to the mountain, and each terrace has its exact counterpart in height on the opposite bank. Every one of these elevations marks time when the rivers stood at a high level. To-day, over these grand accumulations of past ages, plants well known to the botanist bloom in a wonderful profusion. "Wild-pea vines" twine themselves through the dense grass until travel becomes tedious, as, hour after hour, one forces his way through the dense resisting mass. At intervals, over these terraces, are clumps of service-berry bushes, which furnish a fruit prized alike by Indians, birds, and bears; and here and there the cedars and twisted pines rise to the dignity of fully-grown trees. Even yet, the Frazer is wearing its rocky channel lower. Year by year new ledges of rock show themselves on the surface of Stuart's Lake, and prove convincingly that the outlet of the lake is being worn down by the unceasing flow of water over it, whilst on the lake-shores the willows are making their gradual inroads towards the vacant ground left by the receding water. These simple facts connect the present in a continuous line with the earliest terrace that skirts the mountain-foot, and show, amid all the changes impressed upon the landscape, the operation of one long-enduring law.

The river I have named rises among the Peak Mountains, which are hardly yet known by name even to inquisitive geographers. The mountains seem to fill up the valley left between the Rocky Mountains and a northern prolongation of the Cascade range. Imagine, if you will, an elevated plateau covered with here and there a clump of dwarfed, gnarled conifers, from the branches of which hangs the long lichen eaten by the Caribou; here and there a swamp, amid the cool waters of which thrive

plants belonging to a sub-arctic flora ; here and there a diminutive lake, that shines, in the clear air of a great elevation, like a diamond, and the rest of the surface sprinkled over with high mountain-peaks, as though Nature had assigned them their positions in one of her most lawless moods. Between the bases of these peaks wind, hither and thither, narrow valleys, which represent the moiety that is left of the original plain, after mountain and swamps have claimed their shares. These valleys are intersected in every direction by great gulches, worn out deeply by the melting snows during the warm days of spring and summer, and all of which terminate at last in one common water-course that receives the accumulated product of sun and snow, to carry it off oceanward. Imagine a country in which these physical features are markedly grouped, and your ideal will resemble the heart of the Peak-Mountain region, where mere physical force has for all time seemed to run riot, and to shape the country without any regard to the future wants of civilized man ; a region of warring elements, where sunshine and storm, clear skies and cloud overhead, perfect repose and the overwhelming onset of avalanches, are allowed to reconcile themselves as best they may. No one band of Indians regularly occupy the land, though many claim it; and when the wild tribes meet there during the hunting-season, whether they fraternize or fight depends entirely on their whims. Universal ruggedness has left its stamp on the region and its inhabitants.

Within a day's walk, here rise the tributary streams of the Frazer, Nasse, Skena and Finlay's branch of Peace River,—the three first constituting a triad which make their way to the Pacific Ocean ; and the fourth, by reason of the mere accidental interposition of a water-shed, must wind a tortuous course, through one of the roughest mountain-regions on the globe, down to Athabasca Lake, east of the Rocky Mountains, and thence north, through Mackenzie River, to the far-off Arctic Ocean. For mile

after mile all of these rivers fall from precipice into chasm; now churning themselves into foam, now rushing along swiftly, but in comparative quiet, to an easier channel nearer the ocean-level. Much of the land on the banks of those emptying into the Pacific, and in their valleys, is fertile and well adapted to farming or grazing purposes, more especially so as they approach the ocean. Almost every sand or gravel bar will yield a trace (however small it may be) of gold. There can hardly be said to be a dividing ridge to the Peak Mountains; such as there is being lower by far than many of the scattered peaks on either side. The northern mountain-sides are, as a rule, precipitous, and, in many cases, show an absolute front hundreds of feet high. On the other hand, the southern declivities are as constantly more gradual. North of this mountain-system, the broad Nahanni plains stretch away far off, unbroken by any considerable ranges.

It is not a little remarkable, with all the other analogies existing between the western coasts of the Old and New worlds, that the similarity of mere coast-line should be so strongly marked, even in its minuter details. The fact is highly suggestive as an element in any speculations on the probable future of our western shores. It, indeed, almost amounts to more than a mere analogy, and is what a comparative anatomist would call a homology, *i. e.*, an essential identity of structure. To illustrate my meaning, allow me to remark that, under 60° of north latitude, we have at once the *fjörds* of Alaska and of Norway. At latitude 80° N. are the western prolongation of the sandy sahara of Africa, and the equally barren wastes of Lower California. There comes a dropping-off to the eastward, in the Gulf of Guinea, just as our coast trends eastward, from Mexico to Panama. The English islands lie between latitudes 50° and 58° N., as do those of Vancouver's and Queen Charlotte's, while, as if to complete the analogy, we have the Baltic Sea of Europe

well represented by the Frazer River, and the Baltic is prolonged southward in the Gulf of Lübeck, just as the Strait of Fuca is prolonged south into Puget Sound, and the Peninsula of Denmark finds its exact counterpart in the three most north-western counties of Washington Territory; the North Sea, in some points, being the homologue of the strait intervening between Vancouver's Island and the main-land. To say the least, these resemblances are striking.

The Gulf Stream in the Atlantic has also its equivalent in the Pacific. Crossing this ocean in a north-easterly direction from the Island of Formosa, in latitude 22 N., is found the Japan current, a portion of which sweeps northward through Behring Strait, and another portion, near the Kivule Islands, trends eastward under the name of the North Pacific Swift Current, which eventually gets turned southward along the coast of North America. It probably imparts to the air surrounding it and to the land it comes in contact with, as much heat as the Gulf Stream does to Western Europe. The influence of this current will be seen further on when we come to consider the vegetation of the coast.

About seventy per cent of the winds which pass over Vancouver's Island come from the south or south-west. Being, as they must, high in temperature, and carrying much moisture absorbed in warmer latitudes, when they reach the mountains south of Vancouver's Island, and ascend their southern slopes, this temperature is lowered, and much of the moisture that can be is wrung from them. A still more remarkable instance is found in the western ghauts of India, where the abrupt character of the mountain-sides and their short distance from the ocean combine to produce the enormous rainfall of twelve to fifteen inches in a single day. Statistics show that the southern part of Vancouver's Island has fifty-one per cent of its days clear. New Westminster, in British Columbia, and but fifteen miles in from the coast, has thirty days' more rain

in the year than Victoria. It (New Westminster) is not so thoroughly protected by mountains on its south, and has more immediately north of it. On Vancouver's Island snow seldom falls more than twelve days in the year, and the thermometer is not often lower than the freezing-point. Flowers make their appearance in March. Canada has an annual range of temperature of 138° ; at Esquimaux harbor (near Victoria) it is only $48^{\circ} 5'$, showing thus an immense preponderance of equable temperature in favor of the latter over the former. In London, rain falls once in two days; at Esquimaux, but once in three. From these facts we conclude that, in general salubrity, the climate of Vancouver's Island ranks high. Further north the contrast between the climate of the Frazer-River valley and that of the coast under the same latitudes is a wonderfully marked one. As an illustration, I may state that in November, 1865, I saw the mercury in latitude 55° N. in the Frazer valley stand at 15° in the morning and at 90° in the heat of the day, making thus the unusual diurnal range of 75° . On starting in February of the same year for Rocher de Bouller, west of the mountains, I found the snow in the Frazer valley, on the average, six feet deep, and gradually increasing until in the places higher up among the mountains it was from eleven to twelve; the thermometer meanwhile standing at or below zero. The peaks, in their more elevated portions, were in great part bare, from the snow having been driven by the wind into the valleys or more sheltered rocks. Yet after crossing the mountains and reaching their western, or oceanic, side, in two days' time I had reached a place where the snow was hardly over six inches deep, and the air was as bland as that of March or April with us. These points were under nearly or quite the same latitude. As might be supposed, fearful storms of wind come sweeping through these mountain-gorges down to the lakes. Navigation is hence always more or less dangerous on that account. At Bulkeley House or Lake Tatleh (the extreme

northern lake of the Frazer River), the mercury often rises to over 90° in summer, and for days at a time I have known it range from 30° to 50° below zero in winter. Within a few days of this very time they were having a rain-storm at Fort St. Michael's on the shore of Norton Sound, several degrees further north.

The valley of the Frazer has some five lakes, which serve, however, more to diversify its landscape than they probably ever will to add to its commercial importance; the larger ones being in regions where cultivation of the soil offers but little prospect of profit.

What are the mineral resources of the North-west? Silver and gold are reported from Vancouver's Island; though not, I believe, in large quantity. In British Columbia valuable gold-diggings have been opened. The companies alone shipped 5,140,819 dollars between the years 1858 and 1861 to San Francisco. This is exclusive of that carried off in private hands. The largest nugget taken during that time weighed seventeen ounces, and came from the Caribou region. The quality of the gold is good. Peacock copper ore has been taken from the river in Queen Charlotte's Island. It yielded from twenty to sixty-eight per cent of copper. Along the main-land, and on Vancouver's Island, coal has been discovered in large quantity. That from Nanaimo, on Vancouver's Island, yields sixty-eight per cent of carbon against eighty-four per cent of the best Welsh coal. It is of fair quality, and answers well for marine purposes. The fact of its having about two per cent of sulphur is unfortunate. In view, however, of the remoteness of other sources of supply, the chances are that this coal will soon drive competition from the market there. There is no question as to the existence of coal, and that of good quality, in Alaska. In how large quantity it may be found remains unsettled. It is not unlikely that it will be discovered in accessible localities in paying quantities. Many facts lead to the supposition that most of the enterprise devoted to coal-

mining will first concentrate itself about the more southern mines, before going to those of Alaska. Petroleum, white marble, native copper, and sulphur are reported by Mr. Dall in his work on Alaska.

The vegetation of this region has long been one of its most remarkable features. Trees averaging from 150 to 200 feet in height, and with a diameter ranging from ten to thirteen feet, are quite common. To avoid any seeming overestimate of the timber of the region, I will content myself with some brief abstracts from my botanical report, published by the Smithsonian Institution in 1867, and from them a just conclusion may be formed as to the real commercial value of the timber.

Abies Douglasii, Lindl. (Douglas spruce), from 225 to 250 feet high; diameter often twelve to thirteen feet. Makes good spars, and has a fine, clear grain. The tall flag-staff, in the royal gardens at Kew, is made from a single trunk of this tree. It, of all the trees of the coast, stands, perhaps, first in size and commercial importance.

Abies Menziesii (Menzies' spruce) is somewhat smaller, though still a giant.

Abies Mertensiana (Mertens's spruce) is 125 to 200 feet high, with a fine straight trunk, which frequently grows seventy feet before giving off a single limb. It grows as far north as Norfolk Sound, in latitude 57° N.

Abies Canadensis (the hemlock of our forests) is also reported as far north as latitude 57°. There is, I believe, some doubt as to the specific identity of this tree.

Pinus contorta (twisted pine) is found, throughout the valley of the Frazer, on high grounds. It is from twenty-five to fifty feet high, and about a foot in diameter. It forms extensive forests. In the spring months the Indians strip off the outer bark, and then scrape away the newly-formed cambium layer, which is either eaten fresh, or dried into compact masses for winter use.

Thuja gigantea (giant cedar) grows as high as 170 feet, and has a diameter of ten feet. It extends, I think, about

to latitude 51° N. The timber is light, easily worked, and durable, except when exposed to the sun it is liable to split. I have seen the Indians split boards of it, twenty feet in length. They also use the single trunks of this tree, from which to "dig out" the celebrated northern canoes, which are the most perfect models of boat-beauty afloat. The wood, they also make into boxes, dishes, and canoe-paddles, some of which are of exquisite finish. From the inner bark, mats, hats, and baskets, and ropes of great durability, are made.

Acer macrophyllum (large-leaved maple) is found, in most of the interior valleys, as far north as latitude 55° . It is, to a certain extent, a substitute there for the hickory of our coast, and is a favorite fuel of the Indians inhabiting the valley of the Skena during their long winter nights. The Atnahs weave mats and baskets from the inner bark of this tree which will hold water.

Cottonwood trees appear to be ubiquitous over the entire north-west, and are largely used by the Indians of the interior in making their canoes, and for fuel. I have never anywhere seen such beautiful forests as those of the Lower Skena, where conifers, maples, and cottonwood trees were mingled into the densest of groves. On the less elevated prairie-lands, as far north as the Stukine River, various species of grasses, of great value as forage plants, grow in wonderful profusion, and are mixed, in about equal proportions, with the wild-pea vine.

Even at Fort St. James (latitude $54^{\circ} 41'$), horses thrive well during the entire winter on the forage they find under the snow, and need absolutely no care. The swamps are thickly set with sedges, which are, however, of no great value to stock, except in extremity. The high grounds afford, in abundance, the highly-prized "bunch-grass," so famed for its nutritive qualities. Mules and horses will thrive on it alone (even when it is dead and dried), and undergo, at the same time, great hardships.

From the mouth of the Frazer to its extreme headwaters, and along its tributary streams, are immense stretches of as fertile land as can be found on this continent, and before the end of this century they will support an active civilization. The same may be said of portions, at least, of the Skena and Nasse valleys. Fine crops of wheat, rye, oats, barley, potatoes, turnips, are grown at Fort Alexander, in latitude 53° N.; on the southern prolongation of Alaska the timber is of immense value. The islands of the Sitkan archipelago are densely covered with cone-bearing trees, and have a wonderfully diversified flora (for the latitude), the extreme humidity, combined with high temperature and deep shade, leading to an unusually disproportionate development in the specific forms of the ferns. The snow has hardly melted before the ground is covered with a mass of growing plants, which, under the long-continued sunshine of a sub-arctic day, push into flowers and fruit with amazing rapidity. Even on the banks of the Yukon River, trees are reported with a diameter of eighteen inches or two feet, and during the winter of 1865 and 1866 Mr. Bannister saw fifteen hundred feet of boards sawed at Fort St. Michael's, almost as far north as Behring Strait. On the western side of the continent the forests reach almost seven degrees nearer the north pole than on the eastern. I have enumerated within the limits of Alaska 732 species of plants, of which 560 are flowering and 172 are flowerless. The area of Alaska, as computed by the United States Coast Survey, is 570,000 square miles, including the islands. Chester county of the State of Pennsylvania, with but 738 square miles, has just about double that number of indigenous flowering plants. This, however, only implies for Alaska a poverty of specific forms, and not a sparse vegetation, for we find the country has, during its short summer, a luxuriant growth of vegetation, only not of so diversified a character as that of more favored regions.

In certain portions of North-western America animal life is abundant. During the spring and fall months the rivers and lakes absolutely swarm with water-fowl. Grouse are abundant over almost the entire country. Beavers, martens, minks, otters, and bears go to swell the list. The caribou is quite abundant among the Peak Mountains, and on it most of the Indian tribes depend for much of their winter supply of food. During the summer months the rivers are literally alive with salmon. No words can convey any adequate idea of the numbers in which these magnificent fish ascend the streams. The Indians, after having speared or taken them by wholesale in wicker-work baskets, dry them for winter use. The taste is then not unlike that of the hardest and driest birch-bark. A glance at the list of fishes enumerated in Mr. Dall's book on Alaska shows for that region no mean array of piscatorial life. Among the marine fishes are the cod, small-cod, true-cod, halibut, flounder, ulikon, and herring. In fresh-waters are found salmon-trout, salmon, white-fish, pike, sucker, blackfish, and a multitude of others. Of these species there seems to be no scarcity of individuals.

Indians—what shall I say of them? It has often been remarked that those who have spent most time among the Indians have given the most discouraging accounts of them. The inference has hence been drawn that the observers were all prejudiced against the red races. This view, I admit, is certainly the one best adapted to the so-called humanitarian notions; but whether it is so logical as to suppose that these uniform disparaging statements might be due to some mental defect, a moral obliquity on the part of the Indians themselves, I leave others to decide. It might, however, be well to remember that ignorance in the woods is not more apt to engraft virtues on itself than it is in civilization, and that æsthetics are extremely unlikely to be engendered by savage surroundings. Some of the most accomplished rogues I have ever

met were some unsophisticated members of tribes that had never seen half a score of white men. To their inherited original sin I think the best of them have some actual transgressions of their own to add. A gentleman, not less known as a philosopher, than as a botanist, remarks that "ignorance is not *per se* a crime. Its heinousness depends on the use that is made of it." I am inclined to accept this concise statement of intellectual and moral relations; but still, even with this light, the Indian is not made any more immaculate, for I could readily show what shockingly bad use they are accustomed to make of their ignorance.

I have no desire to disparage or to underrate our American races; but, as much of our sympathy for them is the outgrowth of some overdrawn estimates of their character, it is only just that they should be fairly judged before we are influenced in conduct by these estimates. That there have been some Indians of real intellectual power, I will not be unjust enough to deny. I think, however, a fair analysis of the list of worthies will shorten it greatly. Some have been pre-eminent simply by contrast with the herd of educated savages around them; others from overwhelming uncurbed passion and mere physical courage, qualities a pugilist may possess. We have too often regarded their orators eloquent, when their expressions were the natural and uncontrolled utterance of some fierce emotion. They felt, with all their rough natures, all they said, whether that was good or bad; but there is an eloquence depending on high culture which is chaste, pathetic, and convincing, to which a happy selection of similes, derived from an abounding knowledge, is subservient. Of this the Indian knows nothing. His eloquence is not peculiar to himself, but is simply the product of a certain stage of barbarism. It has, truly, the merit of being natural, and borrowed from the forms and forces of nature about him; but it is not so from choice. His ignorance has imposed this upon him. When he tells you his

fathers were as numerous as the flowers on the prairies, he does so, not because he appreciates the æsthetic element involved in the comparison, but because each flower to him counts one. He cannot appreciate the abstraction we call thousands, which is equally eloquent and vastly more definite. Or he may tell you of the roar of the cataract, or of the lightning playing from peak to peak ; but does he deliberately choose these similes ? Rather is it not because, from the poverty of his language, he is compelled to call in the lawless forces of nature to aid him in the expression of his ideas ? He never attains to any conception of his own mental operations. His views are all retrospective, never introspective. Even his spiritual ideas are so that it is equivalent to destroying a pleasant illusion to say just what they are. All assertions to the contrary, notwithstanding, I am convinced there are *some tribes* who entertain no ideas at all of a postmortal state or of any overruling divinity.

Practically we are all believers in manifest destiny, and it is with a poor affectation of modesty that we doubt whether this entire continent will ever belong, or ought to belong, to Anglo-Saxon races.

The recital of our dealings with the Indians does, I confess, make a black page in history against us, if we admit that territory of necessity belongs to those who first occupy it ; but when we think of the millions from overcrowded Europe and Asia who are now seeking a home upon our shores, where they and their children may develop to the fullest extent all their mental and physical powers, the products of which are to add to the wealth, health, and happiness of all mankind, does it not seem as though the greatest good to the greatest number, which is the perfection of political science, demands that to mere *possession of a domain* we shall add, to constitute a perfect title, *improvement of that domain* ? In this latter clause our red races have signally failed.

I am told they are here first in the providence of God; to which I reply by asking are they, then, here more under Providence than we, or are the instincts of barbarism, which demand so large a territory for their gratification, more heaven-implanted than the instincts of civilization which demand the same territory on which to reap greater public benefactions? I use numbers guardedly when I ask whether *three hundred Indians, who are ignorant and destructive in all their propensities*, have any right, divine or legal, to shut off from the occupation of a fertile country *three millions of intelligent, producing white men*, who would develop its resources, and send the proceeds into commercial circulation? Shall we lay an embargo on that civilization, before the heavy tread of whose great ideas and magnificent plans our rivers and prairies become tributary to the well-being of all mankind? Shall we cease belting the continent with railways, or stop extracting the ribs of silver from the mountain-sides of Nevada, lest we limit the range of the buffalo, or trench on the traditional rights of a race that is content to live for itself alone?

There do sometimes arise emergencies when all those minor aggregations of individuals which we designate as races are lost in the one greater, all-comprehending bond of a common humanity; where the more powerful interest not only may, but must, say to the weaker: "You must conform to our modes of life, to our habits of thought; you must cease to stand in the way of the universal progress with which we are identified; nay, more, you must aid us. We leave you no alternative. We no longer regard you as aliens of another tribe, with whom we will have no friendly intercourse, but we force you into our brotherhood; acknowledging your manhood, we demand your active coöperation in our beneficent designs. If you refuse to join this broadest of all alliances, you must pay a penalty, the greater because of the high privileges you fail to accept. Great as is the responsibility incurred in

exterminating you, and your opposition to our mission, we assume even that, if it must be, rather than fail to do our share in the age's work." This emergency, I think, now faces us, and I also think the spirit of our rulers is to offer first, fairly, the olive-branch in good faith; and if this last, best measure fail, then to relentlessly sweep out every opposing element of barbarism. The world can no longer afford to the Indian an independent existence, with the privilege of roaming over tens of thousands of square miles, at the cost which that entails to our better civilization. Mankind at large is no more bound to tolerate a race of vagrants than one nation is to tolerate an individual vagrant. The principle involved in both cases is the same. Within memory of most of those now living, our government compelled the Japanese to throw open their ports, and to break the seclusion they had maintained for centuries, and Christendom approved the act. Do I strain the point when I say the law involved in both cases is the same? However inhuman it may seem, I scout the idea that this broad domain belongs any more to barbarism than to civilization.

There is, however, one more aspect in which we may view our Indian relations. Whilst we are responsible in part for their disappearance, and criminal in our neglect of what does legitimately belong to them, we may also well remember that, over and above all this, a Higher Power has willed their melting away. It is purely a work of supererogation to place any sin at our doors which does not belong there. Broad as are our national shoulders, they already groan beneath the load of iniquity they cannot shift elsewhere. In one word, I think mere human form and a minimum of brain power have accomplished their work on this continent, whatever that work was; and that the Creator is now allowing the red races to disappear, just as He allowed the mammoth and mastodon to go before them. Their vanishing looks like a continuation of the eternal scheme in which lower beings

have always made way for the higher. The very breath of an approaching though still distant civilization seems to destroy them as certainly as the Assyrian host melted before the destroying angel of the Lord.

Father Baegert, a Roman Catholic missionary, who lived seventeen years on the peninsula of Lower California during the latter half of the last century, writes: "It is certain that many of their women are barren, and that a great number of them bear not more than one child. Only a few, out of one or two hundred, bring forth eight or ten times, and if such is really the case, it happens very seldom that one or two of the children arrive at a mature age. I baptized, in succession, seven children of a young woman, yet I had to bury them all before one of them had reached its third year. The unmarried people of both sexes and the children generally make a smaller group than the married and widowed."

Ross and Mackenzie reiterate the same ideas. Now, these statements are distinct and unequivocal, and what gives them a peculiar value is, they come from men who have spent years among tribes remote from any possible injurious contact with whites. They were the representatives of interests striving to protect, from motives of religion or policy, the aborigines from any of the destructive influences which have so often followed civilization.

History, more or less reliable, tells us what fearful plagues decimated the Indians at the very spot at which our pilgrim ancestors afterward landed; a fact, by the way, which the humility of the Puritan band did not prevent them from interpreting into a special interposition of Providence in their behalf. I have travelled down the valley of the Skena and seen whole villages falling into ruin, fisheries deserted, and extensive camping-grounds overgrown with weeds and underbrush, and no corresponding later ones. The most numerous memorials of large tribes were the rude boards they had placed to mark the burial-places of their friends. In times of sadness,

those who still linger on their traditional hunting grounds will tell you of their waning forces. In the summer of 1866 I saw more than half of one large village die from a disease simulating Asiatic cholera. I know of another tribe which within ten years has been reduced from eight hundred men to less than half that number. Infanticide is common among certain tribes, especially of the female children. All of these facts come to us from tribes to whom civilization has never come. Does it not seem as if their mission were accomplished, and that they were doomed to go, irrespective of us? It still does remain for us to cast about them every protection which is not inconsistent with the general good of humanity.

RESOURCES OF THE NORTH-WEST.

I am probably not far from the truth in asserting that, in British Columbia, there are 50,000 square miles of territory capable of supporting a large agricultural community. Over a large portion of this region wheat, rye, oats, barley, with potatoes, turnips, onions, and cabbages, may be grown with reasonable certainty that they will mature. Fruits will undoubtedly do well. Some of the largest and best-flavored turnips and potatoes I have ever eaten were raised on land that, for sixty years, had been used by the Hudson's Bay Fur Company's men, with hardly an idea as to the value of rotation of crops or the use of fertilizers. We can all remember when it was said that the State of California could never be self-supporting. Yet to-day it is, of all others, the one garden-spot of our nation. Its incomparable climate does much for it; but much of the soil in British Columbia is just as fertile, and in some small portions of its surface, where the drought has hitherto been dreaded, the Chinese have shown how much may be done by civilization. The luxuriant crops of grass show what the soil is capable of. I need not again allude to its timber. In the rougher portions of the country grazing may be profitably fol-

lowed. As a future manufacturing centre, I anticipate much from certain portions of this region. The presence of coal of good quality and in sufficient quantity, and the great water-power of the region, can hardly fail to be made subservient to large manufacturing interests.

The future must, of necessity, make much of its marine and fresh-water fisheries. Probably no fish-market in the world is better stocked than that of Victoria, on Vancouver's Island. The salmon of the Columbia have a reputation which has already reached this coast ; and I should probably be stating the truth were I to assert that those from the Frazer, Nasse, Skena, and Skeekine rivers are as much superior to those from the Columbia as those of the latter are to our eastern salmon. At a certain season of the year a small fish, known as the olihan, is taken in incredible numbers in the Skeekine River. They are so absolutely saturated with oil, that when dried and lighted they may be used as candles. The natives express the oil in considerable quantities, which, after being kept until it has reached a ripe old age, with sufficient rancidity, is used by them as a special delicacy on state occasions. This oil has been seriously proposed as a substitute in medicine for cod-liver oil. I can aver that it is equally as loathsome. I think it not improbable that, at no distant day, the fisheries off the Alaskan coast will yet become as important to the west as those of Newfoundland are to the east.

Few of us here have any idea of the real value of the fur trade, or how much it has proved a source of wealth to those engaged in it. The endless bickerings, the open aggressions and the actual warlike encounters of the rough, lawless, but generous-hearted servants of the old North-west Fur Company and the Hudson's Bay Fur Company have passed into history, and may serve to indicate what estimate the traders themselves placed upon their vocation. I think I do not exceed the truth when I assert that, for an outlay of \$50,000 a year, the Hudson's Bay

Company reaps an income of at least half a million dollars a year (rating the furs at London prices) from the New-Caledonian district. Yet this is, by no means, the best-paying district under control of this company. Quoting from Dall's Alaska, I find that, during seventy-six years, Alaska has yielded 3,833,402 skins of fur-seal, which, at an average price per skin during that time, would be \$11,500,206. Besides this, we have of sea-otter skins, 262,546; beaver skins, 390,972; black and silver fox, 66,081; marten skins, 46,911. These are simply the more important furs, and, after making the proper allowance for the thieving propensities of the Russian officials, show conclusively that the fur-trade alone is a source of immense revenue.

Now, these statements as to the resources of the Northwest are founded on what has been developed by the comparatively small demand of a distant market, and a sparse population near at hand. Under the stimulus of a completed Northern Pacific Railroad, we may fairly expect an immense development of the resources, and a corresponding increase of demand, or *vice versa*. The whole future of British Columbia, with all its prospective resources, lies in the completion of that grand enterprise. Who may tell what population the broad prairies and fertile valleys of that region will be supporting half a century hence, or what will be the products of its looms, its mills, and its mines, before even this generation shall have passed away? Less attractive regions, under a less onerous system of taxation and a greater encouragement to individual enterprise, are now the homes of millions. Remove the burden of taxes from British Columbia and Vancouver's Island, support the hands of their citizens, and it will give a new life to a new north-west. Compare the thrift south of the Strait of Fuca with the stagnation north of it, and remember the general fertility of resources in both, and the conclusion is unavoidable that a difference in government must have something to do with

the diverse condition we see in British Columbia and in Washington Territory. As for Alaska (with its similarity, so striking in many respects, to the Scandinavian peninsula), may we not fairly hope its future will, in good degree, be comparable to the present of Sweden and Norway? Its resources are, for the most part, still lying fallow. Time, and time alone, can decide how much it is to be worth to us from a financial standpoint. Enough, I think, is known about the region to make us suspend, for the present, at least, any adverse judgment.

There is, however, still one more aspect in which we may view our occupancy of that territory. In taking a retrospective view of the doings of our race, we find its mission has been to civilize. It has ever been a catalytic element, whose presence has produced a fermentation among the other national elements. It has broken up the unstable compounds and replaced them by more staple ones, which, from fixedness of character, were better fitted to play some important part in the world's history. More than three thousand years ago our Aryan fathers left their early home, north of the region we now know as India, and began their beneficent migration. The race developed in India a civilization we are only now learning fully to appreciate. It peopled Greece, where its language flooded out in blind Homer's recitals, and it gave Thermopylæ to the world. It overflowed Italy, where its great, ever-varying, ever-fitting yet ever-constant character produced the poetry of Horace and Virgil, the histories of Tacitus and Livy, the Theodosian and Justinian codes. "There was a time," says Müller, "when the ancestors of the Celts, the Germans, the Slavonians, the Greeks, the Italians, the Persians, and the Hindoos were living together beneath the same roof." Our dearest terms, "God, father, mother, son, daughter, heart, tears, and home, can be traced to that starting-point." Saturated (if I may be allowed the expression) with the constant instinct of conquest, to be followed by civilization, it has

always adapted itself to the ends it was unconsciously striving after. It found a way open, or it made one, and from every bloody field left in the track of its wanderings have sprung up the compensating fruits of an improved morality, and a greater mental activity than existed before. Its every footprint on a soil has been a blessing ; and it is remarkable that the one common feature, the best and most fruitful feature, in all the races that have an infusion of its blood, is just the one in which they most resemble the parent stock,—a constant striving after better things, which is so utterly unlike the self-satisfied condition of other nations. Hawthorne says, with truth, “The world owes all its onward impulses to men ill at ease. The happy man invariably confines himself within the ancient limits.”

Having received so much, we are now called upon to shoulder the burden of bringing Alaska under the domain of law, civilization, and increased usefulness to the world. It is manifest destiny. It is the working out of our inherited instructive traits. It is duty, and, perhaps, the grand finality of our national existence, as it may prove the last and most difficult task left for us to accomplish.